List of Claims:

Claims 1-31 (cancelled)

Claim 32 (previously presented): A first modem for communication with a second modem over a communication channel, said first modem being in communication with a handset, said first modem comprising:

an off-hook detector capable of detecting said handset going off-hook, while said first modem is in communication with said second modem, and further being capable of generating an attention signal in response thereto; and

a transmitter capable of transmitting a hold request to said second modem in response to said attention signal;

wherein said handset is placed off-hook by a user for dialing an outgoing call, and wherein said communication between said modems over said communication channel ceases for a period of time after transmitting said hold request, and wherein said first modem keeps an upper layer protocol alive during said period of time.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The first modem of claim 32, wherein said hold request includes said period of time.

Claims 34-40 (cancelled)

Claim 41 (previously presented): The first modem of claim 32, wherein said hold request is transmitted using a secondary channel.

Claim 42 (previously presented): The first modem of claim 32, wherein said first modem receives an acknowledgement in response to said hold request.

Claim 43 (cancelled)

Claim 44 (previously presented): A communication method for use between a first modem and a second modem in communication over a communication channel, said first modem being in communication with a handset, said communication method comprising the steps of:

detecting said handset going off-hook;

transmitting a hold request to said second modem in response to said handset going off-hook;

ceasing said communication with said second modem over said communication channel by said first modem for a period of time;

causing a dial tone to be generated for dialing an outgoing call using said handset; and

keeping an upper layer protocol alive during said period of time.

Claim 45 (previously presented): The communication method of claim 44, wherein said hold request includes said period of time.

Claims 46-54 (cancelled)

Claim 55 (previously presented): The communication method of claim 44, wherein said transmitting step uses a secondary channel for transmitting said hold request.

Claim 56 (previously presented): The communication method of claim 44 further comprising the step of receiving an acknowledgement in response to said hold request.

Claims 57-69 (cancelled)

Claim 70 (previously presented): The first modem of claim 32, wherein a dial tone is provided to said handset after said communication between said modems over said communication channel ceases.

Claims 71-72 (cancelled)

Claim 73 (previously amended): A first modem capable of communicating with a second modem over a communication channel, a portion of said communication channel existing over a telephone line between said first modem a central office, said first modem comprising:

a receiver capable of receiving a relinquishment request, while said telephone line is in use by said first modem for communication with said second modem, to relinquish said use of said telephone line; and

a transmitter capable of transmitting a hold request to said second modem to place said communication between said modems on hold;

wherein said communication between said modems is placed on hold and said use of said telephone line is relinquished, and wherein said first modem causes a dial tone to be generated over said telephone line after said communication between said modems is placed on hold, and wherein said first modem keeps an upper layer protocol alive while said modems are on hold.

Claim 74 (previously presented): The first modem of claim 73, wherein a handset shares said telephone line with said first modem, and wherein said relinquishment request is received as a result of said handset going off-hook.

Claim 75 (previously presented): The first modem of claim 73, wherein said relinquishment request is received as a result of instructing said first modem to dial a number.

Claim 76 (previously presented): The first modem of claim 73, wherein a third device shares said telephone line with said first modem, and wherein said relinquishment request is received from said third device.

Claim 77 (previously presented): The first modem of claim 76, wherein said third device places a call on said telephone line.

Claim 78 (previously presented): The first modem of claim 73, wherein said dial tone is received as a result of using a three-way call feature supported by said central office.

Claim 79 (previously presented): A method of sharing a telephone line for use by a first, said first modem being in communicating with a second modem over a communication channel, a portion of said communication channel existing over said telephone line between said first modem a central office, said method comprising:

receiving a relinquishment request, while said telephone line is in use by said first modem for communication with said second modem, to relinquish said use of said telephone line;

transmitting a hold request to said second modem to place said communication between said modems on hold;

placing said communication between said modems on hold;

keeping an upper layer protocol alive;

relinquishing said use of said telephone line; and

causing a dial tone to be generated over said telephone line.

Claim 80 (previously presented): The method of claim 79, wherein a handset shares said telephone line with said first modem, and wherein said relinquishment request is received as a result of said handset going off-hook.

Claim 81 (previously presented): The method of claim 79, wherein said relinquishment request is received as a result of instructing said first modem to dial a number.

Claim 82 (previously presented): The method of claim 79, wherein a third device shares said telephone line with said first modem, and wherein said relinquishment request is received from said third device.

Claim 83 (previously presented): The method of claim 82, wherein said third device places a call on said telephone line.

Claim 84 (previously presented): The method of claim 79, wherein said dial tone is received as a result of using a three-way call feature supported by said central office.

Claim 85 (previously presented): The first modem of claim 32, wherein said first modem keeps said upper layer protocol alive by manufacturing data and presenting said data to said upper layer to maintain an appearance of receiving said data from said second modem.

Claim 86 (previously presented): The communication method of claim 44, wherein said step of keeping said upper layer protocol alive includes:

manufacturing data; and

presenting said data to said upper layer to maintain an appearance of receiving said data from said second modem.

Claim 87 (previously presented): The first modem of claim 73, wherein said first modem keeps said upper layer protocol alive by manufacturing data and presenting said data to said upper layer to maintain an appearance of receiving said data from said second modem.

Claim 88 (previously presented): The method of claim 79, wherein said keeping said upper layer protocol alive includes:

manufacturing data; and

presenting said data to said upper layer to maintain an appearance of receiving said data from said second modem.

Claim 89 (new): The first modem of claim 32, wherein a modem signal used for data communication between said first modem and said second modem is interrupted after said transmitter transmits said hold request to said second modem.

Claim 90 (new): The communication method of claim 44, wherein a modem signal used for data communication between said first modem and said second modem is interrupted after said transmitting step.